



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk
email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 2 April 2012

Other allotment holders are wiser than me; I have sown two lots of broad bean: the first sown in October under a cloche sprang up beautifully only to be cut down by underground saboteurs. Many of the second lot sown in March under netting have likewise been root-nibbled and have shrivelled. I have now installed electric netting and 24 hour video surveillance....well, no, actually I have done what other wiser allotmenters do: I've sown the seeds in pots in my garden at home.

Chris Locke

From our chairman:

Spring is here. This is usually the time when the cartoonist Giles went to town with pictures of people wading through pouring rain sniffing into large handkerchiefs and muttering "Huh, First day of spring!" I don't know what it will be like when you read this but a week or two of pouring rain would be very welcome. Veolia Central our water supplier announced a hose pipe ban from April 5th. Usually hosepipe bans do not apply to allotments which inhabit a no-man's land between gardens and agriculture but this year looks really bad for water supply with the reservoirs at extraordinary low levels. Even agriculture is getting restrictions.

Our hosepipe ban includes siphoning. Any method may be used to get water from the tanks to your plot or water butts which does not involve a hosepipe. If you are on flat land you may use a wheelbarrow loaded with cans and buckets provided they have been filled by dipping. I have steps down from the roadway and I am probably going to park my barrow and load it with big plastic bottles filled at the tank which is opposite, and pass them down the steps. For those further from the tanks it might be a good idea to join forces with a neighbour and use one barrow along the roadway and one on the allotment path. I am sure you can all find ingenious ways of transporting bucket loads of water but please remember that this is not a game. Whatever rain we may get will not, at this time of year get down into the water table which keeps the rivers running and fills the reservoirs. If everyone does not save water and there is no appreciable rain we could end up with standpipes in the street.

Now that **really** teaches you how to save water. Are you going to boil your egg in the water you cleaned your teeth with or are you going to clean your teeth in the water you boiled your egg in?

The water companies want us all to cut our consumption by 10 litres a day. One easy way is not to waste the water run to get hot water for the washing up or the shower. Run the cold water into a can or bucket and you have water clean enough for watering your pots or scrubbing your carrots which would otherwise have gone down the drain. Two cans full per person and you can have your halo.

Refer to our website or your introduction packs for information on how to get the best out of the buckets of water you will have to carry this summer. The basic advice is make every drop count. Do not splash it about all over the plants but direct it to the roots. Do not water in the day when evaporation will steal too much of the water before it even hits the ground and target the plants that need it when they need it. The water needs to be at the roots. If you are transplanting dig a good hole or trench, incorporate moisture retaining compost or **leaf mould** in the bottom and water it. Then fill up the holes with soil, water in and cover with a mulch to keep the water from evaporating. The mulch depends on the plants. Tiny lettuces will be unhappy under a great heap of leaves which would be fine for sweet corn; a plastic cover will be a haven for slugs. Have you come across a **DUST MULCH**? Water rises through damp soil to the surface, evaporates and you have lost it. A layer of dry dusty soil spread on top of your moister soil will interrupt this process and keep the moisture in the soil longer. And it costs nothing and you don't have to remember to bring it with you. A newly hoed row of carrots with dark moist soil looks very satisfying but will dry out the soil very quickly – hoeing needs to be very shallow in the dry soil at the top to leave the moisture down below where you want it.

Look online under vegetable growing in drought. Forget about drought tolerant exotic plants - if the frost does not get them this winter, next year the rain may never stop.

Leaf Mould

Leaf mould is a substitute for peat. The old gardeners swept up every leaf and rotted it in heaps for two years to add to their composts as a water retainer. They called it brown gold. We have done it for you in the car park on SSN and by Grantham mews. We had pollution free leaves from school grounds dumped two years ago and last year. The first lot is now ready for use. Please take it and use it as a soil improver to help you through this summer. PLEASE dig it out neatly. As soon as the older lot is used the new needs to be moved to make room for this year's lot. Don't worry about the big white bindweed roots. Just fish them out and hang them over the fence to dry out and die. There is very little in the way of nutrients in leaf mould but incorporated in the soil to hold water it could save your bacon this summer. And it is free.

Chipboard

Chipboard is **NOT** suitable for allotment use. It does not withstand rain (what's that?) and breaks down by swelling up and falling apart into nasty sharp crumbs which will not rot because they are treated with glues and preservatives. This includes all the plastic coated furniture boards like old wardrobes. It presents a toxic problem of disposal which is your responsibility.

Please do not bring it onto the site at all - we believe in re-use and recycling but this one is definitely not suitable. If you have any on your site please take it to the tip where they can dispose of it safely – now before it causes you trouble. It gives off toxic fumes when burned so please don't.

More on drought

The rules require you to collect rainwater from the roofs of your sheds and greenhouses. It is a condition of permission to build. John Eaton and I will be inspecting soon and we will be looking for buildings with no water butts. Usually you can get butts on freecycle but not, I think, this year. You don't create any more water by harvesting it but you do save it for when you need it. Don't be tempted to bring old asbestos tanks from your loft but galvanised is fine or plastic if they are cleaned.

Freda Earl



OPEN DAY August 12th 2012

Angela is busy this year with the Jubilee Lunch and the potato tasting so I am co-ordinating the Open Day for this year **ONLY**. We can offer you the chance of participating in this amazing event which helps Sunnyside tenants to get to know each other and enjoy a wonderful day with good food to take home or eat while you have the perfect excuse for sitting on a chair on the lawn with like minded people. Open Day helps to remind the ratepayers of the town that we are an asset and deserve their support.

I can offer you the chance to help either on the day or before hand, in a huge range of fascinating ways, with portion size to suit your needs. Even if you have too much to do already we can offer you a small job, on the day or before, which you will find rewarding and worthwhile.

What I mean is – **HELP WE NEED YOU!** If my inbox remains resolutely empty of offers I will have to come looking for you to see what you can do Please either e-mail me on mrsfredae-arl@talktalk.net or phone on 01442 865 661 and leave a message on the answerphone if I am not in.

COMMUNITY GROWING PROJECT

Would you like to grow veg all year round? Make use of a polytunnel and ½ acre of outdoor space to grow your own organic food? Do all of this in the company and with the support of like-minded people from Berkhamsted and Northchurch?

If yes, then this opportunity could be for you!

Transition Town Berkhamsted is looking at the possibility of starting a Community Growing Project in partnership with Sunnyside Rural Trust in Northchurch.

At this stage, we are looking for a small core group of people who feel as passionately about growing their own food as we do.

If you think this is you and feel that you could commit a certain amount of time most weeks to the project, then please contact us at the number below.

(The definite time commitment will become clearer once the size of the core group is established but please note that this opportunity will require a fairly regular investment of time and work from all involved. We will get ample rewards for our efforts in the shape of our own produce and we will certainly host many a BBQ and harvest party to celebrate our achievements!)

Please contact Bettina on 07904 904166 or e-mail bet-tina_strickler@lycos.com for further information.

Found

One pair of lady's spectacles with purple frames on B Road.

Please enquire at the Tea Hut on B15 if you have lost these.

Please Note: To offset rising printing costs, an electronic version of future editions of the newsletter will be sent to all those people that supply an email address to Jenny Sippings – (jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com).

Your current Committee Members

Chairman:	Freda Earl	865661
Vice Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary:	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	John Powell	878640
Minutes Secretary:	Lin Phillips	862882
Newsletter Editor:	Chris Locke	877326
Other members:	Simon Weightman	877607
	Annick Mulcahy	862572
	Andy Walker	07966245732
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
Associate member:	John Driver	862734

Tenancy changes

Welcome to:

Old

Natalie Beecroft A1B

Krasimir Hristov C3

Jane Miller B34B

Diana Ball & Ian Peplow A24B

New

Helen McRae N27B



Diamond Jubilee Party Tuesday 5th June 2012

We have decided to hold this at lunchtime at 1 pm, followed by a toast to the queen and slice of jubilee cake at 3 pm.

All tenants and their families (friends and neighbours too) are invited. To give us an idea of numbers please return the slip below if you are likely to attend. The SAS will provide plates, bowls, cutlery, glasses, green salad, dressings, bread and some cold meats. We would like you to bring a contribution (enough for your party) to share with everyone.

Suggestions:

Savoury: rice, pasta or potato salads, cheeses, quiche etc or anything else you fancy.

Sweets: trifles, cheesecake, fruit salads etc etc. Please bring your dishes ready to serve – we will provide serving spoons etc.

We cannot sell alcoholic drinks, so please bring your own wines and beers. However we will provide soft drinks and Pimms will be available for a small donation to SAS funds!

An excuse for the children to dress up

Why not come as a king or queen and strut your stuff on the catwalk. Please meet at 12 noon at the Sunnyside Rural Trust lawn – judging will take place at 12.30 pm

There will be other children's activities during the afternoon.

Please return the slip below to 82 George Street or 10 Chapel Street or the Tea Hut on B15

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Diamond Jubilee Party

Name:

Plot:

We intend to attend the Diamond Jubilee Party on Tuesday 5th June 2012.

Number in party:

Reminders from some of our tenants

As we have a lot of new allotment holders we think it would be a good idea to mention the following (again).

We know that a couple of these points are covered in the Allotment Handbook which everyone is supposed to receive when they join - but there is no harm in mentioning it in the newsletter as well.

Paths

Allotment holders should keep the grass cut on their paths. The Council mows the grass on the main access A, B and C roads. Ted's lawnmower is his personal property and he kindly lends it to people. The petrol is donated by various allotment holders - it doesn't come out of the allotment funds. If allotment holders want to use Ted's lawnmower or anyone else's then they should make a contribution to the petrol.

Tea Hut

The Tea Hut is Angela's personal shed and the door should be always kept shut. Even if someone is just having a drink at the table, the door should be kept closed.

Bonfires

Some sensitivity should be used when lighting bonfires. If it is a nice sunny breezy day no one wants to be engulfed by the smoke from a bonfire. The rule is that bonfires should be lit later in the afternoon or early evening when it has got a lot cooler. Bonfires should not be left burning when allotment holders go home as this is an obvious fire risk.

Do not burn wet material; only dry, woody stuff should be burnt.

Weeds and vegetables that have gone past their best can easily be composted. If you bring material from home to compost, do not include any cooked food as this attracts vermin. Kitchen waste should be dug into your compost heap.

Roadways

Reminder not to park on roadways except for loading and unloading, now that there are more tenants about. Car parking is available on both sites. There are now quite a lot of young children on plots—please drive **slowly** along roadways.

Allotment society subscriptions for 2011/2012 are now overdue. If you're not sure whether you've paid yet you can check with John Powell on 01442 878640. If you have not paid these should be given to John Powell or left at the tea hut. Membership of Sunnyside Allotment Society is not compulsory but it does give tenants access to National Allotment Association information and to the seed purchasing scheme; this scheme also benefits our Society as we receive a percentage of order payments. Any money belonging to the Society is used for improvements and maintenance which would not be paid for by the council. In the past for example we have hired diggers to improve roadways on the site.

Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs

Subs for 2011/2012 (£3.00) can be sent with this slip to John Powell (20 Castle Hill Avenue) or left at the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Plot Number: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ cash/cheque (please circle)

Growing in a drought:

Additional to Freda's earlier comments ...

If you don't have much mulch, rake the soil level and lay a wet newspaper down before spreading the mulch on top - this makes a thin coating much more effective. Plastic bottles (with the bottom cut off and the lid removed) inserted neck first by a plant will ensure that the water goes straight to the root of the plant and none is wasted. Sticking a cane or stick into the bottle will stop it blowing away.

Children

Reminder that the allotment site is not a playground. Children must always be under the supervision of parents and should not be allowed to run loose between plots. There are many hidden hazards as well as uneven paths and green-houses that could easily be fallen on to.



Hail storm on 20th April